

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

SAM-01 ACDA-05 IO-10 /074 W
----- 034307

R 291330Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2542

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 6669

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, SA

SUBJECT: IF EGYPT OPTS OUT

REF: A) JIDDA 6377

B) CAIRO 9577

C) JIDDA 6643

SUMMARY:

EMBASSY CAIRO'S STATEMENT THAT EGYPT HESITATES TO MAKE
A SEPARATE PEACE WITH ISRAEL BECAUSE, AMONG OTHER REA-
SONS, IT WOULD LOSE SAUDI FINANCIAL SUPPORT REFLECTS
A CORRECT READING OF SAUDI ATTITUDES. IF SAUDI LEADERS
CONCLUDE THAT EGYPT HAS OPTED OUT OF THE CONFRONTA-
TION, AID TO EGYPT WILL STOP AND THE SAG WILL USE ITS
GREAT INFLUENCE WITH THE WEALTHY GULF ARAB STATES TO SEE
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THAT ITS LEAD IS FOLLOWED. SADAT DOES'T HAVE TO SIGN

AN AGREEMENT TO BE CONSIDERED A TRAITOR; ADHERENCE TO THE TERMS OF SINAI II IN THE ABSENCE OF PROGRESS ON OTHER FRONTS WOULD SUFFICE. THE SAUDIS LIKE SADAT AND DON'T WANT TO SEE HIM OVERTHROWN AND THEY WANT EGYPT IN THE ARAB FOLD. THEY WILL THEREFORE USE THEIR WEALTH TO ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE SADAT. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE RECENTLY HANDED OUT IN LARGE AMOUNTS WITHOUT STRINGS IN LIKELY AGAIN BE DOLED OUT MORE CAREFULLY. END SUMMARY.

1. REF A DESCRIBED THE VERY AMBIVALENT FEELINGS OF SAUDI LEADERS TOWARDS THE SECOND SINAI AGREEMENT WHICH MANY CONSIDER TO HAVE BEEN A BAD BARGAIN FOR EGYPT AND THE ARAB CAUSE. SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT, THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE DIRECT PUBLIC CRITICISM OF IT. INSTEAD THE EMPHASIS HAS BEEN ON THE NEED FOR ARAB UNITY. THERE HAS BEEN SOME PRAISE OF SADAT WITH IMPLIED CRITICISM OF THOSE WHO ARE ATTACKING HIM. IN GENERAL A SENSE OF "WAIT AND SEE" HAS PREVAILED.

2. IN REF B EMBASSY CAIRO ANALYSES THE CHARGE LEVELLED AT SADAT BY HIS MOST SEVERE CRITICS--THAT THE GOE IS ON ITS WAY TO SIGNING A SEPARATE PEACE WITH ISRAEL--AND CONCLUDES THAT SUCH IS NOT NOW THE CASE BECAUSE, AMONG OTHER REASONS, THE EGYPTIANS "WOULD LOSE SAUDI AND OTHER WEALTHY ARAB STATES' FINANCIAL SUPPORT." THIS IS AN IMPORTANT POINT ON WHICH THERE SHOULD BE NO AMBIGUITY: SO FAR AS SAUDI ARABIA IS CONCERNED, EMBASSY CAIRO'S STATEMENT IS ENTIRELY CORRECT. THERE WILL BE NO SAUDI FUNDS TO AN EGYPT WHICH HAS OPTED OUT OF CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL. BEYOND THIS, THE DEGREE OF SAUDI SUPPORT WILL BE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH EGYPT IS PART OF A COMMON ARAB FRONT WHICH IS PROGRESSING TOWARD A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION, PREFERABLY PEACEFUL, OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE. MOREOVER, SAUDI ARABIA WILL USE ITS VERY GREAT INFLUENCE WITH THE WEALTHY ARAB STATES OF THE GULF TO ENSURE A COORDINATED POLICY. (KUWAIT, HOWEVER, MIGHT BE OUT IN FRONT OF SAUDI ARABIA ON THIS ISSUE).

3. WHAT CONSTITUTES OPTING OUT? EGYPT DOES NOT HAVE TO
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SIGN A PEACE AGREEMENT WITH THE ISRAELIS TO BE CONSIDERED A TRAITOR. IF IN FACT, THERE ARE NOT FURTHER STEPS QUITE SOON IN GOLAN AND PROSPECTS FOR MOVEMENT ON THE WEST BANK, EGYPT WILL BE CONSIDERED IN DEFAULT OF ITS MORAL OBLIGATIONS MERELY BY ADHERING TO THE TERMS OF SINAI II. THE SAUDIS HAVE NO INTEREST IN ALLOWING THE EGYPTIANS TO BECOME DISTRACTED FROM WAR BY THE ENJOYMENT OF PROSPERITY AND WILL NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROCESS.

4. THE SAUDIS LIKE SADAT AND HIS MODERATE POLICIES. THEY HAVE NO CONFIDENCE THAT A SUCCESSOR WOULD BE NEARLY AS MODERATE AND HAVE VIVID MEMORIES OF THE HOSTILITY WHICH EXISTED IN THE NASSER ERA. THIS LIKING FOR SADAT IS AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE A FACTOR RESTRAINING SAUDI PUBLIC CRITICISM OF HIM. HOWEVER, THE SAUDIS WILL NOT HELP KEEP HIM IN POWER IF THEY CONCLUDE HE HAS DESERTED THE ARAB CAUSE. A FACTOR WHICH AT SOME TIME COULD BE SIGNIFICANT IS THAT THE SAUDIS AS A GENERAL PROPOSITION LIKE SYRIANS BETTER THAN EGYPTIANS. IF SADAT'S REGIME IS DISCREDITED THERE WILL BE AN INCREASING LIKELIHOOD OF THE SAUDIS LINING UP WITH THE SYRIANS AGAINST HIM.

5. HOWEVER, THE SAUDIS WILL NOT EASILY GIVE UP ON SADAT AND WILL TRY TO USE THEIR WEALTH TO KEEP HIM IN THE ARAB FOLD. IF THERE SHOULD BE NO FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARDS AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT, FOR INSTANCE, THE SAUDIS WOULD VERY POSSIBLY CONDITION FURTHER AID TO EGYPT ON REPUDIATION OF THE LATEST SINAI AGREEMENT. RECENT SAUDI FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO EGYPT HAVE BEEN HANDED OUT IN RATHER LARGE AMOUNTS WITHOUT VISIBLE STRINGS. WE SUSPECT THAT THE SAUDIS WILL NOW REVERT TO A MORE CAUTIOUS
US DOLING OUT
OF AID. AS POSSIBLE STRAWS IN THE WIND, THE SAUDI PRESS WITHIN THE LAST FEW DAYS HAS BEGUN
BY IMPLICATION TO CRITICIZE THE
SINAI ACCORD, THOUGH THIS HAS NOT YET EXTENDED TO
SADAT (SEE JIDDA 6643).

6. EMBASSY CAIRO COMMENTS THAT THE EGYPTIANS CAN NOT DO WITHOUT THE AID OF SAUDI ARABIA AND THE OTHER WEALTHY ARAB STATES. WE JUDGE THE SAUDIS TO BE AWARE OF THIS
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DEPENDENCE AND THINK THEY WILL USE IT TO MAKE SURE THAT EGYPT DOES NOT OPT OUT OF THE CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL. AND THEY WILL NOT LET EGYPT ESCAPE THE BLAME FOR ANY AMERICAN FAILURE TO GET ISRAEL INTERESTED IN FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARDS PEACE.
AKINS

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